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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6915
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2682
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5662
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 6434
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7743
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001372

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INS, DRL

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TAGS: PGOV PTER PHUM PREL PINR KDEM IN

SUBJECT: AFTER BOMBS, RAJASTHAN THREATENS ACTION AGAINST BANGLADESHIS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 1336 B. NEW DELHI 1344

Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (SBU) On May 16, the Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP)-led Rajasthan government asked its district magistrates to identify illegal Bangladeshi immigrants living in the state over the next 30 days. In the aftermath of the bombings which rocked Jaipur on May 13 to which the Indian government has linked known Bangladesh-based terrorist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI-B), Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje announced she intended to take action to ensure the safety of her citizens and would deport Bangladeshis residing illegally in her state. While the police have detained some people and are continuing to conduct an investigation, the Rajasthan government appears to have determined that the attacks could not have been carried out without support of Bangladeshis living in Jaipur.

¶2. (SBU) Chief Minister Raje claims that she has tried to get the central government to respond to the influx of illegal migrants in Rajasthan. She said that the state government had written numerous letters to the Home Ministry, the most recent of which dated June 2007. According to Raje, the central government responded, telling her to round them up and put them in a transit camp "somewhere" which the state would have to pay for.

¶3. (SBU) Media reports document 10,000 Bangladeshis living in Jaipur and 20,000 living through the state of Rajasthan. Most of these migrants are poor and came across the border looking for economic opportunities.

¶4. (C) The Bangladeshi Embassy's Political Minister Mashfee Binte Shams told Poloff on 20 March that the GOI had not officially raised the issue of deporting Bangladeshi immigrants with her Mission in Delhi or Dhaka. She noted that MEA officials had recently communicated that India-Bangladesh bilateral relations were very good and stressed that the central government's reaction to Chief Minister Raje's deportation calls has been "very restrained." Shams speculated that the Bangladeshi illegal immigrant issue plays well with BJP constituents prior to elections and may have influenced CM Raje's declaration. She added that she expected the India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group and the Foreign Secretary-level talks to take place in June as scheduled.

Comment: Passing the Buck

15. (C) Since May 13, when the attacks took place, the BJP has taken jabs at the Congress Party led-UPA government for its soft stance on terrorism. First, Raje accused the center of not sharing intelligence information with the state to prevent the attack. Now with a target -- the Bangladeshis -- she is claiming that the UPA government continues to do nothing while there are potential dangerous elements in the state which should be expelled and deported. India Today correspondent Rohit Parihar described Raje's threats to deport Bangladeshis as a pure "political stunt." With a state election in November and a national election in 2009, politicians are scrambling to demonstrate that they take national security seriously. In the meantime, poor Bangladeshi migrants, most of whom are here for economic opportunity are being dragged into a political shootout. However, it is highly unlikely that anyone will get deported since the state does not have jurisdiction over the deportation of migrants across international borders. Further, the GOI will not want to strain relations with Bangladesh. In the end, the BJP rhetoric will most likely prove to be bigger than its bite. Publicly bashing Bangladeshi immigrants is an old BJP political ploy, used to harness public discomfort with illegal immigrants who also happen to be primarily Muslim. BJP leader L.K. Advani raised an alarm over illegal Bangladeshi immigrants when he was Home Minister in the National Democratic Alliance government 1999-2004 but did not take any action to deport them or otherwise make their life in India more difficult. End Comment.

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